

Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission

XCom Mtg – Friday, 11 July 2008, 10 AM @ Dane County Hwy Garage, 2302 Fish Hatchery Rd, Madison, WI

1. WRRTC Chair Karl Nilson called the meeting to order at 10 am.
2. **Roll Call** – Commissioners present for all or part of the meeting:

County	Commissioner		July
Crawford			
	Tom	Cornford	X
	Kersten	Rocksvold	
Dane	Jim	Haefs-Flemming	
	Forrest	Van Schwartz	X
	Gene	Gray	X
Grant	Margaret	Ruf	
	Robert	Scallon	X
	DuWayne	Carlin	
Iowa	Joe	Thomas	
	Charles	Anderson	X
	Gerald	Dorscheid	X

Rock	Katie	Kuznacic	
	Alan	Sweeney	X
	Terry	Thomas	
	<i>alternate</i> Ben	Coopman	X
Sauk	Halsey	Sprecker	
	Joel	Gaalswijk	
	Larry	Volz	X
	<i>alternate</i> Rob	Sinkclair	
Walworth	Richard	Kuhnke	X
	Allan	Polyock	
	Jerry	Grant	
Waukesha	Richard	Manke	
	Robert	Thelen, II	
	Karl	Nilson	X

Others present for all or part of the meeting: Joni Graves (SWWRPC); Frank Huntington and Ron Adams (WisDOT); Ken Lucht (WSOR); Jose Leon (Office of Senator Herb Kohl); and Dick Goddard (Pink Lady Rail Transit Commission).

3. **Motion accepting Graves' certification of notice / Cornford / Van Schwartz / Passed Unanimously.**
4. **Motion approving Graves' revised posted Agenda / Kuhnke / Van Schwartz / Passed Unanimously.**
5. **Motion approving the draft June Minutes, prepared by Graves / Scallon / Volz / Passed Unanimously.**

6. Public Comment –

Jose Leon, from the office of Senator Kohl, said that he works with FEMA and other issues and provided a brief update. Ken Lucht extended thanks for the Senator's awareness of the role of the railroad as an economic lifeline for the region. He said the WRRTC has asked the Senator for his support for an appropriations request from the federal government for the 100-mile Prairie du Chien to Madison Subdivision. He summarized its deterioration and the number of new or expanded businesses on the corridor. He asked that Mr. Leon relay the importance of the proposed Phase 1 appropriations request to the Senator and said that it's very important to keep access to the harbor. Mr. Leon was given a copy of the handout in the Commissioner's packet with flood damage pictures from June. Mr. Leon said he would be taking this information to the Senator.

7. **Correspondence & Communications** – Graves referenced an email from Dick Goddard, Chair of the Pink Lady Rail Transit Commission, which had provided an update on the flooding, further action by some of some communities who favor conversion under rails to trails, and correspondence forwarded that indicated that the state's new Commissioner of Railroads had reversed an earlier decision, which would have been quite costly to the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad. Copies of an email with Commissioner Van Schwartz' insights on the flooding at Devils Lake were at the sign-in table.

8. Graves told the Exec. Comm. that other than Crawford County's vacancy, the WRRTC was at full strength.

9. **Wisconsin & Southern Railroad's Report on Operations** – Ken Lucht, WSOR, provided an update on **June flooding conditions** and said that of the 17 counties where WSOR operates, Sauk County at Devils Lake and the Prairie du Chien Sub at Wauzeka suffered the worst damage. WSOR had been forced to embargo some line segments and repair costs were currently estimated at \$3M. He said they had been talking with FEMA and learned that the Reedsburg Sub was not eligible for any assistance because it was not publicly owned, so WSOR had taken out a loan for that work. He said the Reedsburg Sub is back in operation, although with numerous slow orders over bridges and, in some cases, the water level is so high that they can't fully assess damages. WSOR was able to work with contractors to get materials quickly and the biggest problem was access in remote locations like Wauzeka, but the PDC Sub is back in service now. He said this underscores recurring problem areas and they have met with DNR officials regarding strategies. In the short-term, WSOR offered transload service for its customers. Lucht provided an update on **Current Capital Projects Underway**, which includes the Phase I tie replacement project from Madison to Milton, which received \$2.7M, or less than half of the projected cost of the complete project, which had necessitated dramatically reducing the scope of work for the project. With additional funding, WSOR would hope to implement the welded rail replacement project there next year. The second project for this year is from Horicon to Hartford and is a 115# welded rail project but, with the flooding, the new rail had not been delivered yet. **Rail Inspection Trips** – Lucht thanked those who had participated in the recent Zenda to Janesville inspection trip and said they have been taking trips with elected officials, for whom it has been an eye-opener “like going from a gravel road to an interstate.” On October 10th there will be another WRRTC inspections trip, departing from Janesville at 8 am and busing to Madison; a Waukesha local officials' trip is scheduled for July 24th.
10. **Presentation on WSOR's 2009 Proposed Capital Upgrade Projects** – Lucht provided handouts on WSOR's planned 2009 capital projects and explained that three projects are planned: (a) Northern Division (EWCRC) – N Milwaukee to Slinger crossing upgrades, at a cost of \$3M, and WSOR will be proposing that the East Wisconsin Counties Rail Consortium request \$25K from each of its eight member counties; (b) System-Wide – WSOR proposes improving critical bridges across the system (including some in WRRTC's region) at a cost of \$1.5M; (c) and in the Southern Division, Lucht said by far the biggest project undertaken by WSOR is the planned Phase II continuous welded rail replacement project on 32 miles of the Madison-Milton Sub, where there have been two major derailments on worn rail weighing less than 80#. The Commission took action after some discussion.
- **Motion requesting that WRRTC's eight member counties each contribute \$25,000 toward the local match for planned 2009 capital freight rail system upgrade projects on the publicly-owned system, plus \$1,000.00 as in past years towards the WRRTC's annual liability insurance premium, and with a 2% increase – for a total 2009 request of \$26,520 / county; and requesting that Green County, as a member of the Pecatonica Rail Transit Commission, contribute \$25,500 / Sweeney / Gray / Passed Unanimously.**

FOLLOW-UP: Graves will notify the counties of the WRRTC's 2009 funding request.

11. **WRRTC Financial Report** – *Jim Matzinger, Dane County CPA / WRRTC Accountant* was not present and Graves distributed the Treasurer's Report.
- **Motion acknowledging receipt of the monthly financials report, which Matzinger will include in his August presentation / Van Schwartz / Kuhnke / Passed Unanimously.**
12. **WRRTC Administrator's Report** – Joni Graves, SWWRPC Transportation Planner, summarized the **renewal of the WRRTC insurance policies**, which had been included in the packets sent to Commissioners and requested that the Commission take action, noting that Matzinger had the invoice for the employee dishonestly bond and that she did not have the precise dollar amount of the premium, which was approximately \$350 as she recalled.

- **Motion approving renewal of the Commission’s annual liability policy and rejecting the additional terrorism coverage at the recommendation of its agent, with a total premium of \$15,553, and approving renewal of the annual employee dishonesty bond for a cost not to exceed \$1,000 / Gray / Van Schwartz / Passed Unanimously.**

Graves reminded Commissioners that the **August 2008 meeting is of the Full Commission**. In other business, she handed out copies of the **draft agreement with the Village of Spring Grove, IL**, which was drawn from the Full Commission’s action at its June meeting, following a presentation by staff from the Village. After some discussion, the Executive Committee took further action, which Graves was to forward to the Commission’s attorney for consideration.

- **Motion relating to the terms of the Commission’s pending Agreement with the Village of Spring Grove, IL, which were approved at the June 2008 meeting of the Full Commission, and seeking to additionally require (a) relocation of the road, when improved, to the east-most part of the Commission’s property and (b) that the zoning be maintained as industrial / Van Schwartz / Dorscheid / Passed Unanimously.**

At 11:12 a.m. the Executive Committee returned after a 10-minute break.

Graves said that Wisconsin’s Freight Rail Transit Commission Collaboration had received an *Excellence in Rural Transportation Award* – which she had applied for on behalf of the Pecatonica, South Central, and Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commissions, Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and Wisconsin & Southern Railroad – from the National Association of Development Organizations, and it will be presented at NADO’s conference in August. She distributed facsimile copies of the pending NADO award and circulated copies of the www.wrrtc.org usage report for the previous month.

13. **WisDOT** – Frank Huntington and Ron Adams gave a brief budget process overview.

<p>FOLLOW-UP: Have an RR15 Update on the next Agenda and an action item requesting WRRTC’s support.</p>
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14. **“Railroad 101” Industry Overview / August Full Commission Meeting** – Although he had originally indicated that this would be part of the August meeting of the full commission, Van Schwartz said “chances are slim to none” that it would be on the August Agenda, but that he was leaning towards providing this overview at the November full commission meeting as a half-day event.
15. **Update re WRRTC property in the Village of Arena, WI, and Village’s request for removal of structures** – Grey said he had no success reaching the contact in the Amish community by phone, but that he would like to make a trip out to get that done, noting that some agreement drafted by the Commission’s attorney and the Village’s attorney would be needed. Van Schwartz said that working with the Amish would be their first and preferred option and that using the structures for fire training is their last preferred option.

Before adjourning, the Chair asked Mr. Goddard if he had any comment from the Pink Lady Rail Transit Commission and he provided a summary of flooding damage.

On behalf of the Commission, the Chair thanked Jose Leon and asked him to convey the Commission’s thanks to Senator Kohl.

16. **Motion adjourning the meeting at 11:32 a.m. / Van Schwartz / Gray / Passed Unanimously.**